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ABSTRACT

The concept of career education embraces the programs referred to as vocational-technical but it also encompasses all other segments of the educational program. In the concept of career education in the community college there are two themes, specialization and regeneration. The specialization theme enables an individual to refine his ability to perform a particular life role or a segment of a life role in a more proficient manner. Regeneration means renewing one's capability to perform one or more of the life roles. The community college must accommodate adults at all age levels for the life roles brought about by changes in technology and society. Examples are presented to translate the career education concept into educational activities within the community college, including diagnostic programs for recent high school graduates, credit consideration for veterans, and guidance for mature persons in new life roles. The community college is a practical delivery system for the career education concept. (MF)

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CAREER DEVELOPMENT FOR THE STUDENT IN THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

A Presentation to the
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by

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CAREER DEVELOPMENT FOR THE STUDENT IN THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Technology is changing our lives. Society is changing its values. Individuals are changing their life priorities. People are having to change, wanting to change, needing to change, change, change,.... What is education to do in light of this ever-expanding momentum for change?

The theme for this Fourth International Institute on the Community College is "Education in Transition--Search for a New Balance." The theme for change in education today is to more effectively meet "people" needs. I hope that those of us here today can see the commonality between both of these themes as we reexamine the role and the purpose of education for today's society.

The individual, the human being, the person, is the core or the central purpose for which education exists today. Education is to serve this individual through helping him or her to become fully capacitated, self-motivated, self-fulfilled, and a contributing member of society. Most everyone here would agree that "their" educational program is fulfilling these challenges. I would anticipate that most of us today would readily point out that the community college that we work in was founded on this very basis and may, in fact, have these challenges as part of the mission statement for that institution.

May I divert our attention from these challenges or goals for education and discuss, for a moment, individual needs. We could spend extensive time on the question of how needs are determined or what, in fact, constitutes an individual's needs; however, I will leave that subject for later discussion. Let it suffice that we all agree individuals have needs and I suggest these needs can all be related to an individual's life roles. Each of us play a variety of roles throughout our life and these roles, in fact, become our life. There are a variety of ways of describing these life roles. I would describe them as being a member of a family; functioning as a citizen of a community; participating in avocational activities within society; relating one's self to the regulatory functions of a community, including aesthetic, religious, and moral functions; and finally the life role as a producer of goods or a renderer of services. Most any activity that you or I become engaged in throughout a day relates to one or more of these life roles and in most cases, a given activity would relate to more than one of the life roles.

Again relating to the momentum of change in our society and in consideration of an individual's life-long development, it becomes increasingly likely in today's society that an individual will change one or more of his life roles periodically throughout his life span. The interdependence of life roles within an individual suggests that a major adjustment in any one of the life roles may necessitate a corresponding change in one or more of the other life roles. The concept of career development has as its foundation, these life roles of an individual

and places the occupational life role (producer of goods or a renderer of services) at the central most and most influential of all the life roles.

The concept of career development is based upon life roles of an individual, the interdependence of these life roles and the occupational life role as being central and most influential of all life roles. This concept has historical roots in three primary sources which I will only mention but not expand upon at this time. Sources include: (1) statements of major goals of education enunciated by various groups, (2) educational legislation reflecting society's collective intentions in this area, and (3) the accumulation of research findings concerning individual and career development.

The concept of "Career education" is, in my mind, merely a concept growing out of the career development concept as related to the educational process and the educational system. I see the concept of career education as being similar to an overall philosophy of education and not a specific program, a specific class, nor a specific instructional unit within a course. The concept of career education is a concept, a philosophy, a common thread that runs throughout and penetrates all of the educational process throughout all of the educational system. I think Dr. William F. Pierce, United States Office of Education Deputy Commissioner, was on target when he said:

> This in essence is what the career education approach is all about: To reform and refocus education so that what is taught in the classroom has a clear, demonstrable bearing on the student's future plans--whether these plans be to find a job immediately, to go on to college or graduate school, or some other form of advanced training, or to enter the world of work for a time and then return to education, and in any case to enable the student to go forward secure in the knowledge that he or she is prepared to deal with the world on its own terms.

The concept of career education is not an attack on the arts and humanities, the hard sciences, the transfer program or any other single category of the educational system. Career education is not another way of saying "vocational-technical education." The concept of career education does embrace the programs we have referred to as vocational-technical programs. But it also encompasses all other segments of the educational program including the arts and humanities, hard sciences, etc. Career education is a new philosophy, a challenge, to all segments of education and all disciplines as we have known them in the past.

With this, a modest attempt to limit and delimit my concept of career development and more specifically, the concept of career education; let me now turn to the community college and its responsibility in the area of career development. The concept of career development, as I see it, sets forth a concept of career education which will challenge to the maximum, those community colleges in existence or that spring forth in the future to build the breadth and scope of curriculum necessary to serve the great span of needs possessed by individuals with changing life roles.

The career development concept and the resulting concept of career education in the community college is basic to the philosophy of a comprehensive institution. That philosophy or concept identified the individual as the foundation upon which all decisions are made within that institution. There are what I would call two themes for the concept of career education in today's comprehensive community college. I have labeled these themes "specialization" and "regeneration," neither mutually exclusive of the other.

First, the theme of "specialization." Webster's dictionary defines the term "specialize" to direct toward or concentrate on a specific end; or to adapt to a special condition, use or requirement.... In terms of the concept of career education, specialization means to direct toward, concentrate on, or refine one's ability in a specific or group of life roles. Take an individual who desires to gain more knowledge and/or skill within a life role and develop that specialization. For example, this may mean that a person's avocational life role in the area of water skiing will be refined and developed to a greater level of proficiency. It could mean the citizen of a community wants to become more able to serve as a member of city council or it may mean that an individual wants to become more specialized in a particular occupational field. The career education concept specialization theme is a means of helping an individual to refine his or her ability to enable them to perform a particular life role or segment of a life role in a more proficient manner.

The second theme, being "regeneration," we find in the Webster dictionary a definition "renewed; restored; make better, especially after a decline to a low or abject condition; or to form or bring into existence again; re-establish on a new basis." From a biological standpoint, regeneration is to grow a replacement part, in forestry it is to reforest the area, and in education it should be renewing one's capability to perform one or more of the life roles. We have talked about the changes in technology and the changes in society. We have acknowledged the change in an individual. We have emphasized the acceptability of change as a whole way of life today. It is this change which has fostered the concept of education as being from the cradle to the grave. New knowledge being acquired in our world is increasing at such a rapid rate we can't even keep statistics current on the rate of this knowledge explosion. So, with change and with the increase of knowledge it is increasingly important to provide an educational system which can accommodate individuals who are ready or in need of assistance to cope with these changes and with this growing knowledge explosion facing us daily. No longer can we expect education to be something for the youth that, following "graduation," will enable them to perform their life roles for the remainder of their life. The community college must accommodate adults at all age levels in their need for these life role changes.

To translate the career education concept into educational activities within the community college let me present some examples to you illustrating how I think the community college should perform when the career education concept is in action.

Example A--A recent high school graduate does not know what she wants to do with her life. She has come through a respectable high school program in college preparation and has proceeded to the local community college because of peer pressure, parental influence, and lack of personal goals.

In this particular case it would be desirable that the community college provide a diagnostic program to accommodate this individual. This diagnostic program would not be normal enrollment in a number of classes allowing the student to flounder about the campus looking for life goals. Instead, it is conceivable that the college would develop a specific program for students of this type which would enable them to become aware of the need for life goals, aware of a variety of potential life goals, and an exploration within these various life roles. The program would consist of personal counseling, group counseling, orientation classes, and in potential areas such as community service experience, the development of a "buddy system" with fellow students, or a part-time job of a non-skilled nature. The program would be designed to place the student in a situation where the options available are clearly defined and the student has an opportunity to explore those options most desired by him or her.

Our present system of providing awareness and exploration through our regular classes is by happenstance more than by planning and does not provide a viable framework for decision making on the part of the student. It is completely feasible that through this diagnostic program the student may conclude that this community college is not his or her avenue to the new established life goals. This is a desirable and admirable function for the community college to perform.

Example B--The Viet Nam veteran has recently returned from the service to his home community and has limited training in the area of communications with experience in applying this training on both military bases and in the jungles of Viet Nam. This individual has decided that he wants to get married, to rear a family, to become a participating member of the community, and to work in the communications field. Furthermore, he has decided that he specifically wants to work for the telephone company and become a line repairman.

The community college has an obligation to this indivdiaul to provide him with credit for what he already knows in line of his occupational goals for life and should provide the additional training necessary to prepare this individual to work for the telephone company. The individual should be allowed to challenge or complete performance testing to receive credit for his past learned skills and knowledge and should be diagnosed in terms of what additional skills and knowledge are necessary to complete the program. In this case, it could be quite

possible that the individual would need two terms of community college work to complete his skilled training and to pick up some information in the area of family living. The general education courses such as math, science, English, etc., which are necessary to round out this individual's knowledge and skill to perform in his selected life roles could be scheduled according to his determined needs. The specific principles taught in these classes would be taught in an applied manner to perform the life roles designated by the individual.

Example C--The housewife in her early forties has found her household vacant with her children married and gone and her husband thoroughly involved in his job, leaving her with too much time on her hands and a desire to contibute to society and her own well being. This individual has completed her high school education a number of years ago and has not taken any courses nor been involved with the community college during those years while serving as a housewife and mother. She wanders into the community college registrar's office looking for a course to take.

In this case the community college is obligated to provide the "regeneration" referred to earlier. This housewife is changing her family life role, very likely her citizenship role within the community, and most probably her occupational role. Again, this case requires a great deal of diagnostic attention providing the individual with awareness and exploration of the various alternatives available to her. As in

Example A, this individual does not need to be cast into a number of different course to test her interest, but rather, needs a planned awareness and exploration opportunity. In her case, the awareness and exploration must be at a different level of maturity than that which was provided to the recent high school graduate. It is very possible that this individual, after going through the awareness and exploration program, has decided on an occupational role which will require a baccalaureate degree from college. With this decision, the community college has the responsibility of guiding the student in terms of selecting the institution which would most adequately provide for her needs as expressed with these new life roles.

I could go on citing other examples and I'm sure you could add even better examples to my list illustrating the career education concept in action. It is important to remember that the career education concept dwells on the individual and his or her needs. The aim is to capacitate the individual to fulfill his or her established life roles. In implementing the career education concept there is a need for the community college programs, classes, and instruction to keep these life roles in proper perspective and to concentrate on, and not be limited to, the occupational life role.

The community college is a practical delivery system with a variety of expertise, a close relationship with the community, largely unhampered by the rules, regulations, and traditions normally surrounding more formally established institutions.

The comprehensive community college is indeed a practical delivery system for the career education concept and can serve as a major influence in the career development of a variety of individuals within the community. The career education concept will require this comprehensive institution to move from a discipline oriented program and one in which the learning of subject matter in itself becomes the end, to a program which is service oriented to the individual through aiding the student to establish life goals and to assist the student to become prepared in performing these life roles.

With the implementation of the career education concept I look toward the emergence of a new breed of community colleges and a redirection of the present ones. I would expect the old or traditional categories of occupational education, transfer programs, adult education programs, community service programs, etc., to disappear from the scene and to look upon the comprehensive institution as being geared to serve each individual's needs regardless of age, goals of life, ability to attend classes during the day or evening, length of enrollment in the community college program, etc. I would also see an increase in the movement toward making the community the campus, and the campus a more integral part of the community.

The career development theme through specialization and regeneration is today's demand by society for education to become responsive to the individual and to enable an individual

to re-enter the educational process when and where necessary to accommodate changing life roles. The career development theme in the community college will require a change in the philosophy of the teaching staff, the administration, the board of directors, and even the students who think of the institution as existing for reasons other than the meeting of student needs.

The challenge that lies before those of us here today and to every person in the community college setting is four fold:

1. Each of us must decide whether we understand and accept the concept of "career development."

if we do

2. Each of us must decide if we are committed to the career education concept.

if we are

3. Each of us must plan and implement a strategy for making the career education concept a guideline by which we carry out our specific role in education daily.

and, if we do

4. Each of us must become a part of an overall plan to implement the career education concept throughout our institution and throughout the entire educational system.

Are you committed? If so, what's your next step going to be?

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